

Key Facts about Swine Influenza in Pigs

How does swine flu spread among pigs?

Swine flu viruses are thought to be spread mostly through close contact among pigs and possibly from contaminated objects moving between infected and uninfected pigs. Herds with continuous swine flu infections and herds that are vaccinated against swine flu may have sporadic disease, or may show only mild or no symptoms of infection.

What are signs of swine flu in pigs?

Signs of swine flu in pigs can include sudden onset of fever, depression, coughing (barking), discharge from the nose or eyes, sneezing, breathing difficulties, eye redness or inflammation, and going off feed.

How common is swine flu among pigs?

H1N1 and H3N2 swine flu viruses occur naturally among pig populations in the United States routinely. Outbreaks among pigs normally occur in colder weather months (late fall and winter) and sometimes with the introduction of new pigs into susceptible herds.

While H1N1 swine viruses have been known to circulate among pig populations since at least 1930, H3N2 influenza viruses did not begin circulating among US pigs until 1998. The H3N2 viruses initially were introduced into the pig population from humans. The current swine flu H3N2 viruses are closely related to human H3N2 viruses.

Is there a vaccine for swine flu?

Vaccines are available to be given to pigs to prevent swine influenza. There is no vaccine to protect humans from swine flu. The seasonal influenza vaccine will likely help provide partial protection against swine H3N2, but not swine H1N1 viruses.